

SIMULTANEOUSLY OPERATING SELF BALANCED HUNG WINDOW

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/501,933, filed September 11, 2003. The entire disclosure of the provisional

5 application is considered to be part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates generally to windows for structures such as buildings or homes, and more particularly, to a hung window having upper and lower
10 sashes that are balanced and that operate simultaneously when the lower sash is lifted.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In the construction industry, there are a great number of window designs which can be used for various manmade structures. For windows that are intended to be manually operated in order to open and close, there are also numerous available designs.
15 For windows that are manually operated, consideration must be given as to providing a user the ability to operate the window without exerting an unnecessary amount of force.

One type of window design that is commonly used in residential and commercial structures is the hung window. A hung window typically includes two or more sashes arranged in a vertical orientation, i.e., one sash above and the other sash below. One of
20 the sashes may typically be operated to open or close. Because of the weight of the operable sash that must be overcome in order to move the operable sash, a number of designs have been developed in order to mechanically assist the user thereby reducing the

amount of force necessary to operate the sash in order to maintain the sash in any desired position.

Two very common ways to mechanically assist in operation of the lower sash includes spiral balances or block and tackle balances. In most cases, both the spiral
5 balances and the block and tackle balances are spring assisted. There are numerous disadvantages to both spiral and block and tackle balances. For such spring assisted balances, they are difficult to repair because the window must be disassembled in order to access the working parts for replacement. Spring assisted balances easily wear out and there are limits as to the weight of an individual sash that can be operated with such
10 balances.

Despite the numerous designs that exist for hung windows, there still exists a need for a hung window which has a simple yet reliable construction, and allows a user to operate the sashes with a minimum effort, regardless of the size or weight of the sashes.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

15 In accordance with the present invention, a simultaneously operating self-balanced hung window is provided. Additionally, a method is provided for operating a hung window. The window of the present invention in a preferred embodiment includes two sashes arranged in a vertical orientation. The two sashes may be referred to as an upper sash and a lower sash. One or more cables interconnect the sashes to one another.
20 Each cable is routed over one or more pulleys which thereby enables simultaneous operation of the sashes. As the lower sash of the window is raised, the upper sash is lowered. The purpose of this arrangement is to have the upper and lower sashes move simultaneously with only one force acting on the window, namely, a force to lift the

lower sash. Alternatively, of course, the upper and lower sashes may also move simultaneously when a force is applied to the upper sash. Through the arrangement of the interconnected upper and low sashes, the upper sash acts as a counterweight thereby assisting a user in raising the lower sash. No additional hardware is required for
5 providing a counterbalance.

In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, there are a pair of cables used to connect both lateral sides of the upper and lower sashes, and a pair of pulleys or rollers are installed within the window frame adjacent each lateral side of the sashes thereby allowing simultaneous operation of the upper and lower sashes. By placing a
10 cable at both lateral sides of the sashes, the lifting force from a user is more evenly distributed across the lower sash thereby preventing the lower sash from being lifted in a manner which causes the lower sash to become misaligned or jammed against the frame of the window.

Depending upon the particular size and design of the upper and lower sashes, it
15 may be necessary to add weight to either the upper or lower sash in order to achieve desired balancing between the two sashes. For example, if the lower sash is much larger than the upper sash, then it may be necessary to add some weight to the upper sash, thereby ensuring that the upper sash can effectively counteract the weight of the lower sash. Alternatively, if the upper sash is much larger than the lower sash, it may be
20 necessary to add some weight to the lower sash to ensure that the sashes are relatively balanced, and in this case, to prevent the sashes from inadvertently opening.

The distances that the upper and lower sashes travel during operation are preferably equal; however, it is also contemplated that it may be necessary or desired to have differences between the distances in which the sashes move. Also, it may be required to limit the distance of travel of the sashes for safety requirements. If

- 5 differential travel is desired between the sashes, then various additional pulleys can be used to achieve differential travel. If it is simply desired to limit the travel of the sashes, then stops may be incorporated within the window frame, as further discussed below.

In addition to adjusting the actual weights of the upper and lower sashes to thereby accommodate a desired balancing between the sashes, an alternative is to provide
10 one or more additional pulleys whereby the force that is exerted when lifting the lower sash can be mechanically enhanced through use of the additional pulley(s). For example, a third pulley could be used in conjunction with each pair of pulleys to provide the desired mechanical advantage. The third pulley would be mounted within the window frame adjacent each lateral side of the sashes or mounted on the sash.

- 15 The pulleys and cables may be mounted within the interior channels of each side of the window frame, thereby allowing a user to adjust the length of the cables as necessary, or to otherwise service the cables and pulleys without having to disassemble the window.

In another aspect of the present invention, a method is provided for manipulating
20 sashes of a hung window whereby the sashes can be balanced with respect to one another. Also in accordance with this method, it is contemplated that the upper and lower sashes may travel similar or the same distances, or differential distances. Additionally, the method contemplates balancing of the sashes either through adding necessary weight to

one of the sashes, or utilizing a the alternative pulley arrangement, as discussed above, to handle any differential weight between the sashes.

One distinct advantage of the present invention is the ability to counter balance large or heavy sashes that otherwise exceed the capacities of traditional spring assisted
5 balances.

Another advantage of the present invention is the ability to improve air circulation within a room by providing openings in the hung window at the top and bottom of the window, yet only requiring application of a single force to operate the window. In order to evenly cool or ventilate an air space within a building, it is desirable to have at least
10 some circulation which better mixes stratified airstreams. With the hung window of the present invention, the dual openings created by the simultaneously operated sashes enhance air circulation through convection because air may enter one opening and exit the other opening.

Other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent by a
15 review of the following figures, taken in conjunction with the detailed description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is an elevation view of the hung window of the present invention installed within a structure;

Fig. 2 is a fragmentary vertical section taken along line 2-2 of Fig. 1;

20 Fig. 3 is a horizontal section taken along line 3-3 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is another horizontal section taken along line 4-4 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 5 is an enlarged fragmentary perspective view illustrating the preferred arrangement of a cable and pair of pulleys mounted within the window frame;

Fig. 6 is an enlarged fragmentary perspective view illustrating attachment of the ends of a cable to an upper sash and a lower sash, and relative alignment of a pair of pulleys with the cable; and

Fig. 7 is an enlarged fragmentary perspective view illustrating an alternative pulley arrangement to include the use of a third pulley to provide a user a mechanical advantage in operating the sashes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, the hung window of the present invention is shown installed within a common building B. Molding around the window is not shown in order to view the window frame elements. The window 10 includes the frame defined by a pair of vertical frame members 12 that are interconnected by a horizontally extending upper frame member 14 and a horizontally extending lower frame member 16 or sill. An upper sash 18 and lower sash 20 (Fig. 2) are sized to fit within the frame so that both the upper and lower sash may slide in a vertical manner within channels formed within the vertical frame members 12. The vertical frame members define the lateral sides of the window. The upper sash 18 may be of a standard construction to include a pair of spaced vertical supports 22 and 24 which are interconnected by upper and lower horizontal supports 26 and 28. The construction of the lower sash may be the same as the upper sash. Accordingly, the lower sash also may include a pair of spaced vertical supports 30 and 32 interconnected by horizontally extending upper and lower supports 34 and 36. Any desired decorative design can be used for the window elements which are supported within the upper and lower sashes. In the example shown in Fig. 1, the upper and lower

sashes each include one or more glazing supports 38 which may result in multiple panes per sash.

Referring now to Fig. 2, internal structural details of the window can be seen.

The window 10 is mounted between a head H and a sill S that define the upper and lower edges of a window opening formed in the building. The upper frame member 14 is secured to the head H as by one or more screws or bolts 37. Similarly, the lower frame member or sill 16 is secured to the sill S as by one or more screws 37. The frame members 12, 14 and 16 as well as the supports of the upper and lower sashes may have a desired cross sectional shape which facilitates the mounting/emplacement of various seals or weather strips as necessary to seal the sashes within the window frame. For example, as best seen in Figs. 3 and 4, a parting stop 75 and a weather seal 76 may be provided. Fig. 2 shows the lower sash in the closed position. Optionally, a conventional window locking mechanism 40 may be mounted to the upper and lower sashes enabling a user to selectively lock the window. Additionally, a conventional interlock mechanism 42 may also be incorporated in the design of the upper and lower sashes to prevent inadvertent movement of the sashes after being locked and to provide a weather seal. The lower sash may include a lifting rail 44 which can be grasped by a user in order to operate the window.

Figure 5 illustrates one lateral side of the window frame. Each frame member 12 has a pair of vertical channels 72 that allow the sashes (not shown) to travel therein. A pair of pulleys 48 and 50 are mounted against the exposed interior surface of each vertical frame member 12. Each cable 46 is routed over the corresponding pair of

pulleys. One end of each of the cables 46 attaches to a lateral side of the lower sash while the other end of each of the cables 46 attaches to a lateral side of the upper sash.

Fig. 6 illustrates the other pair of pulleys 48 and 50 as they are attached to the respective lower supports of the upper and lower sashes. As shown, the lower support 36 of the lower sash may include a cylindrical opening 52 that receives a horizontally
5 extending anchor 54. A transverse hole intersects opening 52 and the anchor 54 enabling a threaded end 56 of the cable 46 to extend therethrough. One or more nuts 58 may be installed over the portion of the threaded cable end which extends between the opening 52 and the anchor 54. The lower support 28 of the upper sash is of a similar construction
10 which allows the opposite end of the cable 46 to be secured to the lower support 28. Accordingly, the opposite threaded end 56 again extends through a cylindrical opening 52 and an anchor 54. One or more nuts 58 may be mounted over the section of the threaded cable end which extends between the opening 52 and the anchor 54. In order to prevent the anchors 54 from sliding within the respective openings 52, fasteners 66 may
15 be used to connect the anchors to their corresponding horizontal supports. The opposite lateral side of the sashes may be constructed in the same way as shown in Figure 6, thereby allowing the mounting of the other cable 46 and the other pair of pulleys 48 and 50.

If it is desired to adjust a length of a cable 46, the user may simply move the
20 nut(s) along the length of the threaded section. By adjusting the effective length of the cable 46, the travel and positioning of the sashes may be controlled to match the frame of the window. It is desirable to have much of the weight of the sashes suspended by the

pairs of pulleys, and the sashes should be positioned so that they may seal the window when the window is in the closed position.

Referring back to Fig. 3, the horizontal cross section of this figure illustrates the manner in which pulleys 48 and 50 are mounted to their respective vertical frame

5 member 12. Frame member 12 may have a pair of spaced mounts 64 with horizontal openings which allow bolts 60 to extend therethrough. The heads 62 of the bolts 60 are tightened as required to seat the pulleys against the mounts 64. As best seen in Figure 6, pulleys 48 and 50 may be of a conventional pulley construction wherein each pulley has a stationary internal section 72, and a rotating exterior section 74. Sealed bearings (not
10 shown) enable rotation of the outer sections 74 around their respective inner sections 72. The pulleys 48 and 50 are preferably spaced horizontally from one another a distance so that the free ends of the cables may extend vertically to connect to the respective lower supports of the sashes.

Now referring to Fig. 7, an alternative arrangement is shown wherein an
15 additional pulley 70 provides a user with a mechanical advantage in operating the sash. As shown, the additional pulley 70 is situated between the pair of pulleys 48 and 50. The cable 46 is routed such that it traverses under the pulley 70. Conveniently, the pulley 70 may also be mounted within the vertical frame member 12, and may be sized so that the width of the frame member 12 does not have to be altered. Accordingly, it may be
20 necessary to make the third pulley 70 of a smaller diameter than that of pulleys 48 and 50. With the arrangement shown in Fig. 7, the user would obtain a two to one mechanical advantage in either lifting the lower sash or lowering the upper sash. Those skilled in the art can envision additional ways in which additional pulleys can be

provided to yet further enhance the mechanical advantage required in a pulley arrangement.

The frame members and sash supports may be made from aluminum, or any other advantageous materials. The cable design, the channels of the pulleys, and the diameter
5 of the cables may be matched to provide optimal performance in terms of frictional losses or other considerations.

Although it is preferable to have a cable and a pair of pulleys installed at each lateral side of the sashes, the present invention is functional with only one cable and a pair of pulleys installed at one lateral side.

10 The advantages of the present invention are clear. Simple yet effective means are provided enabling a hung window of virtually any size or weight to be operated in a manner that does not require extensive additional hardware to mechanically assist a user in operating the window. A combination of cables and pulleys can be incorporated within a traditional hung window design that allows the window to be self balanced, and
15 that also enables simultaneous movement of the upper and lower sashes.

In accordance with the method of the present invention, the method provides a way to manipulate the sashes of a hung window thereby requiring only a single force to be applied to simultaneously move the upper and lower sashes. In accordance with the method, a window construction is provided in the form of a hung window including an
20 upper sash which is mounted in the frame and slideable therein, and a lower sash mounted in the frame and slideable therein. Means are provided to allow force to be transmitted from one sash to another. One or more pairs of pulleys and a corresponding cable or cables are used to transmit force between the sashes. The cables interconnect the

upper and lower sashes. To operate the sashes, the upper or lower sash is grasped. A force is then exerted in the direction desired to open or close the sashes. If the lower sash is grasped and an upward force is applied, the lower sash will be lifted while the upper sash will be simultaneously lowered. Alternatively, if a force is applied to the upper sash in a downward direction, the upper sash will be lowered and the lower sash will be lifted. As mentioned above, a user may selectively balance the weight of the upper sash with respect to the lower sash thereby optimizing an amount of force necessary to raise the lower sash, or alternatively, lower the upper sash. In a preferred embodiment, the upper and lower sashes travel equal distances with respect to one another. However, it is also within the spirit and scope of the invention to allow differential travel distances between the sashes, as also mentioned above. In lieu of balancing the sashes by adjusting the weights of the sashes, the method of the present invention also envisions use of one or more additional pulleys thereby providing a user a mechanical advantage to operate the sashes.

Although the apparatus and method of the invention have been provided in a preferred embodiment, it shall be understood that various other changes and modifications may be made within the spirit and scope of the present invention.